

Editor's Note



Happy New Year, readers! For *English Teaching Forum*, 2008 is the year of the American city. This year each issue of *Forum* will focus on a city from a different region of the United States. If you know nothing about these cities, we will happily introduce them to you. If you already know something about them, we will tell you more.

We start off with New York, New York—a city that is legendary even to Americans. This sprawling metropolis holds a commanding presence in American culture, and its influence extends throughout the country. Numerous books, plays, movies, and TV shows are set in New York, and its famous buildings and bridges are familiar backdrops in films and print media. Images of its Statue of Liberty crop up all over the country.

New York hosts yearly celebrations that New Yorkers (and visitors to New York) enjoy in person and that Americans all over the country watch on television—the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, with its colorful floats and giant helium-filled balloons, and New Year's Eve in Times Square, with its huge crystal ball dropping at the stroke of midnight. Whether we watch from the sidewalks of New York or from the comfort of our couches, we all feel we're part of the experience.

Like many Americans, although I have been to New York, I have mostly admired it from afar. But never was the city more clearly in focus than when I saw it through the eyes of my English language students from the other side of the Atlantic. I was teaching English at a business school in Paris in 1988, when the European Union was on the horizon, and students pursuing international business saw that English would be useful as a common language. Besides my classes, I taught private conversation lessons to Parisians working in advertising, who wanted to know American idioms and vocabulary they could use in doing business with ad agencies in New York. To increase their exposure to English, my students watched the nightly news broadcast from New York, and for a number of them, New York became the center of their English-speaking world. They talked about it all the time.

New York City may not be a focal point for all of our readers, but we hope that once you learn about this fascinating city—via the feature article, photos, and lesson plan in this issue—you will want to talk about New York in your own English classes.

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